

EXCURSIONS.

IN response to the Editor's invitation to send notes upon old climbs, however familiar, I write a few lines upon an outing to Clochnaben on the last Saturday of April. It is more than

CLOCHNABEN thirty years since I first did Clochnaben, on that
IN occasion walking from Banchory and taking the
APRIL. hill en route for the Cairn o' Month and Fordoun.

Nowadays with a motor car the excursion is a very simple one indeed. A friend motored me out to a point on the Glen Dye road near Scolly's Cross, where we left the car, and about an hour and a half's walking took us over Threestane Hill and Mount Shade to the top of Clochnaben. On the top of Threestane Hill is a small granite tor with two smaller boulders lying a few yards away on either side and these, I suppose, give the name to the hill, which, truth to tell, is hardly a separate top at all, but simply a shoulder of Mount Shade. In the hollow between Mount Shade and Clochnaben we came upon a herd of deer and later in the afternoon a large herd, numbering some fifty, was seen on the south of Clochnaben. When Sir John Gladstone made Glen Dye into a deer forest, some twenty or thirty years ago, he imported some Canadian wapiti to interbreed with the native deer and this strain is still detectable in some of the antlers. A keen north wind was blowing on the top, but we found shelter on the lee side of the rocks and sat for an hour or more in the sunshine. When we arrived, the view to the west was obscured by rain showers. Before we left the top, these had cleared and a magnificent prospect presented itself of the Cairngorms, glistening white in a mantle of fresh snow. With a glass one could look right into the corries of Beinn a Bhuird and to the left was what we took to be the Coire Sputan Dearg top of Ben Macdhui with the main top, all white, behind, and to the left of this again just a glimpse of still more distant cliffs and snow, possibly the Garbh Choire cliffs of Braeriach. At first glance we could not see Lochnagar, it seemed to be hidden by Mount Keen: but suddenly with the glass it came in sight just over the left shoulder of Mount Keen, not the whole face of the mountain, as in the familiar view from Deeside, but just the top of the cliffs and the Cac Carn Beag, all pure white. The sun was shining upon Lochnagar and not upon the nearer hills and this made the view all the more striking. As the afternoon was

still young, we did not descend straight to the car but proceeded some two miles along the ridge towards Mount Battock, over the ground which is notorious for its peat hags, and then dropped down towards the Dye and back by the Bridge of Dye, always a lovely spot, with the rocky peak of Clochnaben rising in the west. A feature of the day was the exquisite green of the young foliage on the larches. It is always a pleasure to visit the Glen Dye district, and see the splendid woods and plantations with which Sir John Gladstone is enriching the country. On the east side of the road, near Scolly's Cross, there is a fine planting of larch, Sitka spruce and Douglas fir, all growing magnificently, and also an interesting planting of larch and beech interspersed, while on the far side of the Dye at the Bog of Saughs a large area has just been planted. Enterprise like this, if general, would soon make a different and richer Highlands.

H.

THE hill road called "The Cryne Corse" is the eastmost of the old roads across the Mounth, or, at least, of such of these roads as cross the hilly part of the Grampians. It provides

THE one of the best afternoon excursions which are CRYNE CORSE. available from Aberdeen. Formerly a route of considerable importance, as being the direct connection between the Howe of the Mearns and lower Deeside, it still retains signs of long since vanished traffic. The route cannot be better summarised than in the following words, quoted in one of the Spalding Club volumes from a document of the early part of the 17th century: "Craiyincrosse Monthe layes from the Church of Sanct Palladius vulgarly called Pade Kirk in the Mearnes to the Mylles of Drum." To make an afternoon walk of the Cryne Corse you can take it in the opposite direction, and instead of making for Paldy Kirk (Auchinblae) go to Carmont Station: train to Crathes at 1 p.m., return from Carmont at 7.15 p.m. This walk is some nine miles from station to station. The walking directions are as follows:—From the bridge at Crathes you make for the bend in the Slug road at Spyhill; thence by the peat road to the moss on the top where you hold to the left and with some care you can discover the old track which goes down to the Cowie Water in almost a straight line. Watch for a piece of so-called "Roman" stone paving on this part of the road. Two burns are crossed at the foot of the brae, then the Cowie, and thence you go up past the ruined buildings of Lady's Leys. Near the top, where you begin to look down into the Howe of the Mearns, the tracks divide. You take the left hand one which leads down the hill to Tannachie, about a mile from Carmont. The whole walk can be comfortably done between the trains mentioned. With regard to the variant spellings of the name, it may be of interest to add that "The Cryne Corse," as above, is the form which Mr. Alex. Macdonald, M.A., who has an unrivalled

knowledge of the district, gives as the correct one; he states that old speakers pronounce "Cryne" in two syllables, and this is confirmed by the spelling of this word in the Spalding Club reference. W. M. A.

REFERRING to my footnotes on page 260 of Vol. X of the *Journal*, I climbed Lochnagar on the 2nd August last, and owing to very favourable conditions in the south, was fortunate to

THE see both the Isle of May and Arthur's Seat. The
HORIZON line of sight for the latter crosses the eastern
FROM shoulder of the East Lomond at a point about one
LOCHNAGAR. and a half miles east from the summit of that hill.

According to the late Mr. Gordon Jenkins' rule fully 500 feet of the upper part of Arthur's Seat should be visible and this seemed to be about right. The Moorfoots which, with perfect visibility, should form the background, and probably a bad one, were obscured by a slight haze with the result that the outline of Arthur's Seat stood out quite clearly against what was in effect a "sky background." J. A. PARKER.

TWO men, the veteran and the novice, had a most enjoyable and refreshing walk over the Beinn a Ghlo tops, in the early days of last July. The weather was perfect for tramping,

THE though the views were limited in most directions.
ROUND OF That obtained of the Cairngorms, however, was
BEINN A well worth the loss of all the rest, and the novice
GHLO. could hardly be dragged away from the entrancing
sight.

On leaving Blair Atholl they proceeded by Glen Fender's steep brae to Loch Moraig, and along the Shinigag road (which they found much improved) by the base of Carn Liath. Leaving the road they skirted the slopes of that peak by an old peat track till it ended in the moss. There was no trouble last year in drying peats. A bee line was then made over the moor for Airgiod Beinn, whose shapely cone rose directly ahead. It was here that a fine little hill on the left, Beinn Beg (2,500 feet), and one rarely climbed by parties "doing" the Beinn a Ghlos', claimed the attention of the veteran, while the novice proceeded eastwards alone. Forces were united again on the lower slopes of Airgiod Beinn, and the combined party rapidly mounted this stony slope and so over the summit (3,490 feet) and along the great hog-backed ridge to the crest of Carn nan Gabhar (3,671 feet) with its three large cairns. A slight detour was made to the top of Coire cas-eagallach where lunch was "served." The south end of Loch Loch lay placid and unrippled 2,000 feet below, while the lonely Falar Lodge was also in view. Re-crossing the summit the climbers proceeded to the Bealach au Fhiodha (2,893 feet) where the last snow patch of the season lay, then up the short distance to the summit of the middle peak of the

group with the long sounding name, Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgairn (3,505 feet). Ten minutes were spent here directly opposite the Kite's Cairn (3,159 feet), (Carn Chlambain, of the maps) whose long red scaur was very noticeable, and this was duly impressed on the mind of the novice as a sure means of identifying this mountain, even from long distances. They then set off down the long slope to the Cromalton Pass (2,550 feet) and up the other long and tortuous ridge to the summit of Carn Liath (3,193 feet) with its large cairn. This is the most popular peak of the Beinn a Ghlos, and many visitors there be who get no farther. Half-an-hour was profitably spent here, surveying the landscape o'er, 'ere a descent was made to the road near Loch Moraig, and so down the glen to Blair and a welcome tea, for Beinn a Ghlo is a "dry" mountain. J. S. F.

LAST July the Editor met a party of four young Englishmen on the Ben Macdhuì-Cairngorm plateau, and, finding that they were doing a weeks' camping and climbing, he asked them to send a note of their doings when they returned south. They have done so and the Editor will perhaps be excused if he says it is a pity that the CAIRNGORMS. Club members are not equally responsive to the invitation to contribute short notes:—

We arrived at Aviemore at 8.40 on Saturday morning, and having bought bread and other things, set off through Rothiemurchus. We had some difficulty here, losing the path completely, and having about twenty minutes rough going through thick heather. We struck the Larig in the end, and then climbed left over the Lurcher's Crag, and over the ridge beyond, dropping down to the Shelter Stone about 5.30. We found this in good condition and very comfortable.

Sunday. We climbed the north side of Loch Avon, and up Cairngorm, then over Cairn Lochan, and so to Ben Macdhuì. Down by Loch Etchachan to the Shelter Stone.

Monday. Climbed Beinn Mheadhoin, and then right down to Derry Buin and Linn of Dee, and so to Braemar, where we fixed up after some trouble.

Tuesday. Visited Invercauld, and falls of Garbh Allt.

Wednesday. Drove to Callater, and climbed Lochnagar.

Thursday. By fording the Dee (no difficulty), we visited the Linn of Quoich.

Friday. Followed the Dee right up past Linn o' Dee, to the bothy north of Devil's Point. Good fire going and pleasant company. (Two campers from Edinburgh.)

Saturday. Climbed Devil's Point, then along the ridge and up to Cairn Toul. Over Angel's Peak and up to Einich Cairn. Over to summit of Braeriach. Then dropped down to Loch Einich. Very steep descent, which took us some time.

Sunday. Followed path along Loch by west bank of Loch Einich, and so up Sgor Gaoith, and over Sgoran Dubh. Here we were in cloud for first time, but only for about 15 minutes. Then over the Creag Dubh, and then troublesome descent to Lochan Eilan, and so to Aviemore.

Monday. Left Aviemore 9.40, arrived back in Crewe 7.40. I might add that we all come from different parts, but work brings us together at Crewe. We are :—R. F. Farnell, 24, Prestatyn, N. Wales, D. H. Stuart, 24, Croydon, London, D. G. Ritson, 19, Stockport, and G. R. Keat, 19, Wimbledon London.

ONE August morning a party consisting of three Levack's, accompanied by two ladies, set out by car from Braemar, at 8 o'clock, for Derry Lodge. About an hour later another party EXACT of two Reid's, also accompanied by two ladies, MEETING ON started from Grantown-on-Spey, motoring to the BRAERIACH. upper bothy on Loch Einich, after receiving a telephone message that the Braemar party had set out. The objective of both parties was to reach the summit of Braeriach at 2 p.m. It was seen that all above 3,000 feet of Braeriach was enveloped in mist and two of the Braemar party did not go higher than the Pools of Dee. The other three, however, continued the ascent by the south west shoulder.

From Loch Einich the steep ascent for the first hour was made in broiling heat and the imposing outline of Sgoran Dubh formed part of a beautiful panorama. Soon we were in the mist, and with little difficulty the edge of the plateau was reached. To traverse the flat mile to the cairn was less easy, when one could not see twenty yards ahead. The party extended to 20 or 30 feet intervals and proceeded in single file, guided by compass bearings. A tract was made every fifty paces or thereby and a fresh bearing taken before proceeding. Eventually the edge of the cliffs on the south side was reached, and in a short time the cairn and three figures were seen simultaneously. The time was 2.5 p.m., just five minutes after the time of *rendezvous*. From each party the question was asked, "How long have you been waiting?" and the reply in each case was "Just arrived"—a very fortunate coincidence.

By the cairn a second lunch was soon on the go, and with the exchange of jokes and edible tit-bits a happy quarter of an hour soon passed, though the mist was as thick as ever, and the cold pretty severe. The return journeys were in both cases uneventful, and all congratulated each other on a very successful day. The heather at this time was most luxuriant and a discussion arose as to its colour. It was agreed that the colour actually was petunia, that the popular description of "purple" would not likely be displaced.

E. B. R.